

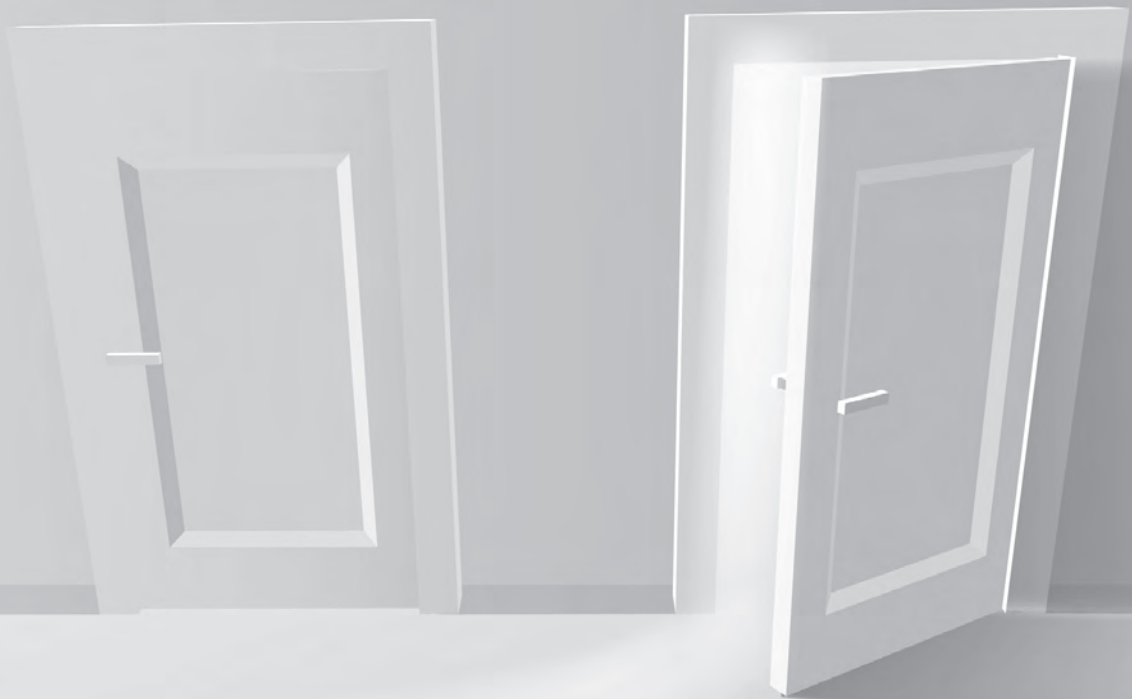
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Why immigrants seeking asylum are better off in Newark than Atlanta



Asylum requests in Atlanta in 2016

14

GRANTED

590

DENIED

Asylum requests in Newark in 2016

85

GRANTED

43

DENIED

Ted Sherman For The Star-Ledger

In Newark, an immigrant here illegally seeking to remain on a claim of asylum has a better than 2 in 1 chance of prevailing in federal immigration court. In Atlanta, the odds are considerably stacked the other way. Some go as far as calling it an “asylum free” zone. Only about 2 percent of asylum seekers there are successful, according to federal data.

Nationwide, with asylum claims rising, the rate of those being granted the right to stay can hinge on where an immigrant appears and which judge hears the case. “The disparity is incredible,” said Lori Nessel, director of the Seton Hall University School of Law Center for Social Justice. “Something is wrong when it varies that much.” The U.S. Justice Department’s Executive Office for Immigration Review, or EOIR, reported that nationally, about 43 percent of asylum seekers in pleadings before immigration court judges were granted the right to stay here in fiscal year 2016. But as the Trump administration continues to step up its fight to remove those seeking sanctuary, numbers show that much depends on where an immigrant appears. In Newark, for example, immigration court judges on the 12th floor of the Peter W. Rodino Federal Building granted 85 requests and denied 43 in 2016. In New York, 85 percent of asylum requests were granted, and three of four asylum seekers asylum appearing before immigration court judges in San Francisco were allowed to remain. “The data does show that in certain cities, immigrants may have statistically a better chance of

SEE ASYLUM, 4

WASHINGTON

Tax break for home owners could stay

Itemized deduction restored in GOP plan to be released Wednesday, lawmaker says

Jonathan D. Salant For The Star-Ledger

The House Republican tax plan to be released Wednesday will include a deduction for property taxes, according to the lawmaker who’s writing the bill. “At the urging of lawmakers, we are restoring an itemized property tax deduction to help taxpayers with local tax burdens,” said House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady, R-Texas. Rep. Bill Pascrell Jr., D-9th Dist., said he’s still opposed to the GOP tax plan. “This doesn’t make it smell any better,” said Pascrell, a member of the Ways and Means panel. “The whole thing stinks.” There also is talk of a new tax credit for all homeowners, including those who don’t itemize, Brady said. “I hope members of Congress will examine it closely to determine if they want it included before tax reform heads to the president’s desk,” he said. Having failed to replace the Affordable Care Act with legislation that would leave as many as 32 million additional Americans without insurance, President Donald Trump and congressional Republicans have turned their attention to overhauling the tax code for the first time since 1986. Their plans have run into opposition from lawmakers of both parties representing New Jersey and other high-tax states, **SEE TAX, 2**

COMMENTARY

Refs who walked out over kneeling should lose jobs



Steve Politi For The Star-Ledger

Ernie Lunardelli already has an invitation to appear on Fox News, which means his so-called protest has achieved its goal. This was a premeditated, attention-grabbing stunt for him and his son to walk off the field before refereeing the Monroe-Colts Neck high school football game. That the 54-year-old business owner couldn’t leave without screaming in the direction of the Monroe sideline — where a few players had taken a knee during the national anthem — tells you all you need to know about his intentions. Lunardelli couldn’t yell at Colin Kaepernick, the former NFL player who started this movement, so he targeted a few teenagers instead. Quite a role model, isn’t he? So do not, under any circumstances, make the mistake of equating the peaceful protest of those Monroe football players with the decision of the officials to walk **SEE POLITI, 3**

INSIDE

Christie sides with Mueller

Gov. Chris Christie says there is no need for Robert Mueller to recuse himself from leading the Russia investigation. **Page 2**

